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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 000051

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STATE FOR AF/W-EPLUMB, INR/AA-BGRAVES

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IV](#)  
SUBJECT: STATUS OF IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

REF: A. 07 ABIDJAN 1187

[1](#)B. 07 ABIDJAN 1181

Classified By: Pol/Econ Section Chief Silvia Eiriz for reasons 1.4 (b/d  
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[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Government of Cote d'Ivoire is moving forward on the identification process, which is a critical stage in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA) and at the heart of the country's political crisis. All 111 audiences foraines teams that are to issue birth certification have in fact been deployed and are covering all areas of the country. The President signed a decree on reconstitution of civil registries and a working group is to be formed to determine modalities for reconstitution. The President also signed a decree designating French company SAGEM-Securite as the technical operator for the identification process. SAGEM's operating guidelines indicate a compromise was reached between the President and the Prime Minister regarding the role to be played by the National Institute of Statistics (Institut National de la Statistique - INS). While SAGEM will cooperate with INS, it will not be supervised by the INS, as sought by the President's camp. End Summary.

#### Audiences Foraines

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[1](#)2. (SBU) Ibrahima Ba, head of the Prime Minister's Working Group on "Audiences Foraines" (mobile courts issuing birth documentation to persons over 13 whose births were never registered) and Reconstitution of Civil Registries, told Poloffs January 15 that as of January 1, 2008, all 111 audiences foraines teams covering the entire country, had in fact been deployed. He provided Poloffs with a list of areas where the teams are deployed. According to Ba, citizens know where the teams will work because notices are posted in each location and United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) radio announces the locations on a daily basis. Ba noted that each team is supposed to work for 3 months and that the entire audiences foraines process would be completed at the end of March 2008. Ba stated that as of December 26, 2007, there had been 101,192 applications; 97,594 had been approved; 3,601 had been rejected. He explained that most rejections occurred because persons applied in the wrong jurisdiction or were under the age of 13.

[1](#)3. (C) Drissa Kone, Cabinet Director to the Secretary General of the Rally of Republicans (Rassemblement des Republicains - RDR) party told Poloff January 16 that the RDR will not agitate if the audiences foraines process is not perfect. He expressed skepticism that the process will actually end at the end of March.

¶4. (SBU) The President signed a decree in December 2007 concerning reconstitution of civil registries. Ba told Poloffs that the Ministry of Justice has responsibility for reconstitution of the civil registries. The decree states that a commission will be created in each sub-Prefecture nationwide and in each commune of the city of Abidjan. Ba said that each commission would be headed by the sub-Prefect or the Mayor. According to the decree, the commissions will publish their findings and present them to the court of first instance, requesting that the court order reconstitution of the registries. According to Ba, the court will have 48 hours to respond. Ba explained that a working group will be created to determine how the reconstitution of the registries will be carried out. He stated that the reconstitution will be completed in 3 months and told Poloffs that this is a feasible timeframe.

¶5. (SBU) Poloff asked Ba about the coordination between his working group and the EU/World Bank project on reconstitution of civil registries. Surprisingly, Ba responded that there is no connection. Ba said the Ministry of Interior approved the EU/World Bank project, which focuses on modernization of civil registries. Ba argued that modernization makes no sense in Cote d'Ivoire because Ivorian law does not allow information obtained from computers to be presented in court. Ba said all the country needs is hard copy replacements of its civil registries.

SAGEM's Role  
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¶6. (SBU) The President signed a decree on January 13, 2008

ABIDJAN 00000051 002 OF 002

designating French company SAGEM-Securite as the technical operator for the identification process. Ba gave Poloffs a copy of the operating guidelines for SAGEM. The guidelines indicate that SAGEM will provide materials and software to carry out the identification of the population and the electoral registration. SAGEM will report to the government's Working Group on Identification of the Population on the progress it makes, the challenges it encounters, and the solutions it proposes to address these challenges. SAGEM will cooperate with the National Office of Identification (Office National d'Identification) and the National Supervisory Commission on Identification (Commission Nationale de Supervision de l'Identification - CNSI) on production of the identity cards and with the Independent Electoral Commission (Commission Electorale Independante - CEI) and the INS on production of voters' cards and the voters' list.

¶7. (C) SAGEM's operating guidelines seem to be a compromise between the President and Prime Minister. Failure to agree on modalities to carry out the identification process derailed the November 18-22, 2007 meeting of the OPA Evaluation and Monitoring Committee (Comite d'Evaluation et d'Accompagnement - CEA). Minister of Interior and member of the Ivorian Popular Front (Front Populaire Ivoirien - FPI) ruling party Desire Tagro wanted SAGEM to be under the oversight of the INS and the Prime Minister's camp refused to agree. The opposition parties view INS Director General Mathieu Melleu, who was appointed by President Gbagbo in 2002, as a partisan FPI supporter (See Reftel A). SAGEM's operating guidelines include cooperation with the INS, but do not give INS oversight over SAGEM.

¶8. (C) Comment: Identification is at the heart of the country's political crisis. Kone told Poloff January 16 that the RDR will insist that every Ivorian have an opportunity to obtain an identity card, but did not explain what actions the RDR will take if it determines that the identification process is not thorough. In November 2007, Kone had told

Poloff that the RDR will not boycott the elections. Prime Minister Soro, who like the RDR has a northern constituency, also needs to deliver a thorough and transparent identification process. Ba's resistance to the EU/World Bank project to modernize the civil registries makes no sense unless the government is trying to announce that the reconstitution of the civil registries has been completed ahead of the elections. The EU/World Bank modernization project is likely to take years rather than months. End Comment.  
AKUETTEH